

## Abstracts from the 2016 Research and Thesis Poster Session of the 51st Annual American Dance Therapy Association Conference

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**Abstract** The Research and Practice Committee of the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) has sponsored the research poster session at each annual conference for the past 21 years. The studies represented in the current abstracts from the 2016 Research and Thesis Poster Session of the 51st Annual ADTA conference feature a wide range of scholarly works and thesis projects in current dance/movement therapy trends. The following 22 studies have been selected for their quality and contributions to dance/movement therapy research.

**Keywords** Conference proceedings · Dance/movement therapy research · Student abstracts

### Exploring the Nature of Walking in Dance/Movement Therapy: An Artistic Inquiry

References to the use of walking, not only as a basic body action but also as an expressive element, are abundant in dance/movement therapy (DMT) literature. Walking is so common in DMT practice that it is easy to forget that it is a fundamental aspect of movement and thus worthy of a study in the DMT context. The researcher's intent was to generate descriptions of its range of use in DMT practice and to find possible symbolic or psychological meanings of walking in this therapeutic medium. In order to do so, the researcher used an artistic inquiry methodology. Four dance/movement therapists participated in a data collection workshop. They were asked to think of a time they used a walking intervention in a session and embody a client who walked in that session. Participants created a

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movement motif based on this walking intervention, taught their motifs to the researcher and wrote a brief poetic narrative in response to what they saw, felt or experienced. A focus group followed, wherein these participants were asked to discuss ways they have used walking in their clinical practice. The researcher analyzed data that emerged using theater and dance techniques and then generated a final creative synthesis in the form of a solo performance video. The video created was in response to the research question, “How is walking used in DMT? And what are the sensations, emotions, themes and meanings that emerge from the use of walking in DMT practice?” Five major categorical themes were crystallized. These themes include: *shifting awareness/grounding/opening*, *instability/stability*, *walking as a bridge to dance/movement*, *walking as a metaphor/relational process*, and *transforming disability into ability*. Despite the limited range of experiences represented, findings from this study may influence dance/movement therapists to utilize walking more intentionally in practice, training and supervision.

**Lauren Albert**, MA, R-DMT received her master’s in DMT and counseling from Drexel University. She is a registered dance/movement therapist and a Yoga Alliance Certified instructor. Over the last 10 years, she has taught movement technique at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting and collaborated with emerging choreographers from Springboard Dance Montreal. Before becoming a dance/movement therapist, Lauren received her BFA in Theater from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts.

### **Dancing Through the Philippine Island: Integrating Dance/Movement Therapy into Filipino Culture Through the Mental Health Setting**

This thesis reviews current literature on the mental health system in the Philippines and highlights a need for enhanced mental health services. The researcher examined how she could integrate dance/movement therapy (DMT) into Filipino culture and how this could be implemented in the mental health field. The author chose an autoethnographic approach, to include her history as an emerging Filipina DMT, a Filipino woman currently living in a Western society, learning a Western form of psychotherapy. To strengthen her study on incorporating DMT into Filipino culture, she also conducted five interviews with mental health professionals in the Philippines: two psychiatrists, a nurse, an occupational therapist and a psychologist. The interview topics included: (a) *Pakikisama*, a Filipino trait that reflects valuing relationships with others, friendship and camaraderie; (b) *Hiya*, which can be translated as shame, humiliation, inferiority, shyness; (c) respect for elders; (d) *Utang na loob*, a Filipino concept of lifelong debt to others, especially family members; (e) feelings versus facts, in making personal decisions; and (f) Filipinos festive attitude and love for dance. Four conclusions were summarized as follows: Filipinos can relate to dance and it is possible to integrate distinct Filipino traits in DMT work; there is a need in Filipino culture to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness; mental health is just as important as physical health; protecting those with mental illness requires laws and a mental health act.

**Josefa Angelica L. Atayde** is a Filipino ballet dancer who received a MS in dance/movement therapy from Pratt Institute. She danced professionally in the Philippines before deciding to move to New York and start this program. Her quest to become a DMT began when she volunteered for a relief mission in Leyte, Philippines, the most affected region by the biggest typhoon in the world—Typhoon Haiyan. This was when she realized she wanted to share the beauty of dance with the different islands in the Philippines through DMT.

## The Essence of Contact Improvisation in Dance/Movement Therapy

Although different from dance/movement therapy (DMT), contact improvisation (CI) has elements that are relevant to DMT practice. These include connection, attunement and development. Over the past year of internship with two quite different populations, I have experienced how attuned movement in DMT sessions benefits both these populations by enhancing connections to self and others. Case examples with children with autism and seniors with dementia are introduced to highlight the benefits of attuned movement for connection and transformation. Particularly, I refer to three children with autism, ranging in ages from four to twenty years old, and two groups of seniors, from sixty-five to ninety-five years old. A six-minute documentary film summarizes the project *Circle of Life* at the nursing home where the three aforementioned elements of CI and DMT were used, reflecting treatment goals and significant changes in the clients. Dance is healing and therapeutic by its nature, because through dance, people access an authentic, equal, and democratic dialogue. In CI, dancers move and touch to liberally express the desire to be connected, attuned, recognized, and understood in an authentic way. Reflecting back on the book *Caught Falling* (Koteen & Stark Smith, 2008), I understood the essence of touch and movement as means of attunement, connection and development, which are significant aspects of DMT, as well. I appreciate the depth and richness of CI and its insights that are really metaphors of life.

### Reference

Koteen, D. & Stark Smith, N. (2008). *Caught Falling*. Northampton, MA: Contact Editions.

**Minh Bui** is a R-DMT, graduated from Sarah Lawrence College (Fulbright program). Since 2010, she has created innovative art-based workshops and training courses, utilizing body movement for healing, empowering self-expression and inner leadership. Minh has worked with populations of diverse backgrounds, especially, those mentally and physically challenged. Now, she pioneers applying DMT for development in Vietnam by leading DMT sessions for children with autism and spreading DMT through workshops for thousands of participants over the year. The project “Circle of Life” can be viewed following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyOrPicZEAA>.

## Dance/Movement Therapy for Adolescents with Eating Disorders: Investigating the Benefits of a Creative Framework

A dance/movement therapy (DMT) pilot study was developed for 23 inpatient adolescents with eating disorders, in a framework adapted from Kleinman (2009). For the first phase, participants received up to six DMT sessions in a closed group. A second phase involved a period of eighteen weeks, with a maximum of six participants for up to six weekly sessions. Each session was structured the same way: (1) Introduction: participants created and shared their own movement signature with the group; (2) Warm-up: participants were invited to create their own movements and stretches to share with the group, in association with their feelings of the moment; (3) The development of the theme for the session was based on the participants' emotions, movement expressions, and verbal statements at the time. A movement phrase was built following each participant's feelings and physical expressions. By hypothesis, this requires a mechanism for translating thoughts into movement phrases that reflect the participants' inner states. During the session, the movement phrase was repeated and validated by all participants in the group and by the therapist; (4) Closure: participants were invited to discuss their impressions of the session, and to write in their expressive journals what they had observed. Qualitative data coded from the journals indicate that participants found the sessions beneficial for their body awareness, body image, self-expression, self-esteem, relaxation, and involved change of ideas. Overall, the benefits are in expressing and translating feelings through body language. DMT invites participants to "be in the present, in the bodily experience", to be aware of their feelings and sense of self. DMT may contribute to eating disorders multidisciplinary interventions with a new non-verbal therapeutic perspective to facilitate participants' integration and adaptation to the treatment plan and the connection between body and self.

### Reference

Kleinman, S. (2009). Becoming whole again: Dance/movement therapy for those who suffer from eating disorders. In S. Chaiklin, & H. Wengrower (Eds.) *The art and science of dance movement therapy* (pp. 125-143). New York & London: Routledge.

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**Andrea de Almeida**, R-DMT, holds a MA in Physical Education and Recreation (Specialization in Dance Education) from the University of Alberta, with coursework also from New York University. She has worked with several populations, including adolescents with eating disorders and seniors, in several clinical and academic settings in Montreal. Ms. de Almeida has also extensive experience teaching dance and creative movement for children in Brazil, USA and Canada. Her website is <http://dance-movement-therapy.weebly.com>.

## Unraveling and Understanding the Therapeutic Self: A Heuristic Inquiry on Countertransference

The purpose of this heuristic inquiry was to discover how my counter transference informed my experience during my clinical internship. My research question was: How does my personal and cultural counter transference inform my therapeutic relationships, my clinical choices, and my professional development as a dance/movement therapy and counseling intern with survivors of domestic violence? Data were collected through semi-structured journal entries that included both writing and art-making; this occurred three times per week for five weeks. Data analysis began two weeks after data collection. Sequential creative synthesis with a research consultant occurred once per week. Findings include increased awareness of emotional and physical responses during sessions: retreating when emotional safety was threatened, and increased attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms when clients were not grounded within the sessions. My ADHD symptoms made it difficult to be in a present relationship with my clients. Additionally, findings indicate that I experienced parallel processing in my therapeutic relationships. This suggests that shared experiences flavored my therapeutic relationships and clinical choices by enabling me and my clients to grow concurrently. This enabled me to become a more informed, knowledgeable therapist.

**Donna DeCotiis** recently finished her DMT coursework at Columbia College Chicago. She completed her field placement at the Association House of Chicago, working with children within the agency's summer enrichment program, and her clinical internship at Between Friends, working with survivors of domestic violence. Donna will begin working as DMT at Barnabas Behavioral Health Center in New Jersey upon submission of her Master's thesis in December.

## Dance/Movement Therapy and Ecopsychology: A Heuristic Journey

The purpose of this study was to better inform my practice as a dance/movement therapist by integrating ecopsychology, the study of human and nature relationships, in my practice. This study also explored how my interactions with the natural environment could facilitate my transformation of consciousness, as well as how this may contribute to my personal healing and to the Earth's healing. The primary research question was: How can I utilize a ecopsychological framework to better inform my dance/movement therapy (DMT) practice? Through a qualitative-heuristic study, I tracked my interactions with the natural world by journaling. The data was analyzed through qualitative data analysis (Forinash, 2004) and movement analysis. Movement analysis allowed for an embodied and deeper understanding of the data. Findings suggested an increase in attentional patterns as witnessed through an increase in awareness and flow. The study was able to describe the different ways in which I took the world in, and relate with the environment. Tracking my interactions with the natural world led to a deeper understanding of my unconscious

material and my relationship with the Earth. Future implications of this work, include ways in which these interactions with the natural world may provide transformation of consciousness and personal healing to clients through DMT interventions. The embodied connection I found with the Earth is a process I intend to bring to my practice for clients' personal healing.

### Reference

Forinash, M. (2004). Qualitative data collection and analysis: Interviews, observations, and content analysis. In R. F. Cruz & C. F. Berrol (Eds.), *Dance/movement therapists in action: A working guide to research options*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas

**Jessica Diaz** holds a MA in DMT and Counseling at Columbia College Chicago, and a BA in Psychology with a minor in dance from Arizona State University. She currently works as an expressive therapist at Chicago Lakeshore Hospital, and also works for Thresholds at downtown Safe Haven. Jessica conducted a heuristic study integrating DMT and ecopsychology in the hopes of evolving her practice as a therapist.

## Encountering Disenfranchised Grief: A Pilot Investigation of the Clinical Lived Experiences in Dance/Movement Therapy

Disenfranchised grief is a form of grief that one may experience when there is social denial, invalidation, and/or scrutiny of one's authentic grieving (Doka, 1989). This study employs a transcendental phenomenological methodology to understand how clients' lived experience of disenfranchised grief is present within the clinical therapeutic relationship in dance/movement therapy (DMT). Data was collected for three dance/movement therapists, credentialed as R-DMT or BC-DMT, who have previously worked or currently work with clients experiencing disenfranchised grief, through individual semi-structured interviews. Data analysis through the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method and embodied writing (Anderson, 2002) were used concurrently with data collection. Preliminary themes showed that a person's disenfranchised grief: (a) manifests in the body; (b) is influenced by socio-cultural factors; (c) involves shame. Participants consider the therapeutic relationship and body awareness as beneficial for clients experiencing disenfranchised grief. Additionally, participants reported experiencing somatic counter transference. These findings suggest that disenfranchised grief is an embodied experience and DMT may be beneficial for clients experiencing this form of grief.

### References

Doka, K. J. (1989). *Disenfranchised grief: Recognizing hidden sorrow*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Anderson, R. (2002). Embodied writing: Presencing the body in somatic research, Part I, What is embodied writing? *Somatics: Magazine/Journal of the Mind/Body Arts and Sciences*, 13(4), 40-44.

**Katie Dominguez** is a MA candidate completing her thesis at Columbia College Chicago. As a California native, Katie sees no boundaries in her pursuit to contribute to the field of DMT. She received her BA in psychology from California State University, Long Beach. Her passion for research emerged while serving as a research assistant for the Rape Kit Notification Project with undergraduate professor, Dr. Courtney Ahrens, and the Joyful Heart Foundation.

## **A Therapeutic Perspective of Death and Dying Through Dance and Movement**

The purpose of this heuristic study was to understand the dance/movement therapist experiences and perceptions of death and dying through the use of dance and movement. The researcher asked the following questions: What are dance/movement therapists experiences of death? How can dance and movement help one understand personal issues with death and dying? The study provided an overview of important death and dying issues and how that content integrates into the field of DMT. To further describe this approach, the primary researcher followed six stages of heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) and conducted thorough conversational interviews with three dance/movement therapists who had over five years of experience in end-of-life care. Five main themes surfaced from these interviews: (a) being present; (b) finding balance; (c) the value held by silence; (d) education coming from experience; (e) appreciation for life. These main themes led to the climax of this study, both a creative synthesis of improvisational movement exploration, and a film that expressed an aesthetic perspective of the results. The content revealed how this experience with dying populations and death deeply impacted and enlightened the dance/movement therapists' perception of life. The results of this study led the researcher to conclude that, while experience was a valuable component in understanding the various issues surrounding death, it was, in fact, through education and awareness of death that the dance/movement therapists developed the readiness to work with this population. Having gone through this process, the primary researcher understood how these findings held importance, leading toward a more authentic way to develop empathy when working on these issues through DMT. By utilizing this research process, including literature review, personal reflection, and immersion in other dance/movement therapists' experiences of end-of-life care, the primary researcher discovered her awareness and understanding of death and dying.

### **Reference**

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology and applications*. London, UK: Sage.

**Jaclyn Gatto**, a Long Island New York native, has been a lifelong dancer. During her first year at Pratt Institute, she interned at a nursing home where she experienced the loss of three residents in her DMT group. This experience immensely inspired her research inquiry. Jaclyn believes that with a drive to be educated on death and

dying issues, she will be capable of becoming a better DMT as she grows with experience.

## **Effects of Dance Movement Therapy for Elderly with Early Dementia: A Three-Arm Randomized Controlled Trial**

Dementia is a condition characterized by a progressive decline in memory, language, recognition and movement, which constrains daily living and social roles. The accompanying behavioral and psychological issues bring distress and burden to the affected elderly and their caregivers. Dance/movement therapy (DMT), which combines psychotherapeutic elements with the well-established benefits of physical activity on cognitive and psychosocial functions, is worth rigorous investigation. With a three-arm randomized-controlled design, this study aims to examine the benefits of DMT in comparison to physical exercises on the neuropsychiatric symptoms, psychological well-being, cognitive functioning, daily functioning and dementia prognosis in Chinese elderly with very mild to mild dementia. The project included 201 participants (67 in each arm). The one hour, twice a week intervention lasted for 12 weeks. Outcome assessment was performed at baseline, post-intervention (3 month), 6 month and 12 month. We hypothesized that elderly with dementia in the DMT group would experience a possible delay in the progression of dementia severity compared to control and exercise groups. While the project is still on-going, preliminary data from 30 participants indicated that the trend in cognitive functioning in the DMT group, from digit-span and trail-making tests, shows a higher resilience to cognitive decline. Depressive symptoms measured by abbreviated geriatric depression scale show no change in the DMT group, while increase in the other two groups. Positive emotions, measured by visual analogy mood scale, show a slight increase in the DMT group, compared to no changes in the exercise and control groups. Clinical observations revealed an increase in positive mood frequency toward the end of the DMT intervention compared to the beginning, as well as improved daily functioning.

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**Rainbow Tin Hung Ho**, PhD, BC-DMT, REAT, AThR, RSMT/E, CMA, CGP is the Director of the Centre on Behavioral Health, Professor of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Director of Master of Social Sciences (Behavioral Health) and Master of Expressive Arts Therapy programs, The University of Hong Kong. Rainbow has been working as a researcher, therapist, teacher, and artist for many years. Her research focuses on creative and expressive arts therapy, psychophysiology, mind–body practices, and spirituality for healthy and clinical populations.



## Dance/Movement Therapy and Tai Chi for Seniors with Dementia

Aging affects all three layers of health: physical, mental and emotional. While aging, older adults may experience disruptions and difficulties in maintaining their emotional health and level of social engagement. Seniors are at higher risk of being inactive, chronically ill, and dependent on caregivers, resulting in a rapid decline in their quality of life. During a clinical internship at a suburban adult care community, tai chi principles were integrated into dance/movement therapy (DMT) sessions, while attitude transformations and behavioral changes were collected among a small group of seniors with dementia. A quasi-experiment design was used to estimate the impact of tai chi intervention on this target population. Even though the overall cognitive level remained relatively unchanged, a decrease in apathy and depression has been noted. The application of tai chi in DMT sessions constitutes an integrated and adapted modality, in which the movement follows the traditional conceptual frame, characteristics and elements of tai chi, but is also specifically designed to meet the needs of a population of seniors with dementia. The changes observed provide a motivational argument for future research into tai chi principles and their integration into DMT session for seniors diagnosed with dementia.

**Elissaveta Iordanova**, MS, MA, MFA, R-DMT, has an extensive experience in traditional, modern and creative dance, bridging Eastern and Western aesthetics and therapeutic practices. Elissaveta obtained 1000 clinical internship hours in DMT at The Wartburg Adult Care Community, New York Presbyterian Hospital, and Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn. She provided DMT sessions to seniors at the Northern Adult Day Health Care Center in Brooklyn and Bronx VA Hospital, NY. Elissaveta teaches dance in NYC and offers private dance movement activities among the Hasidic community of women in Kyrias Joel, New York. Currently, Elissaveta is a full-time dance/movement therapist at Maimonides Medical Center.

## Transformations: An Autoethnography of Dancing with Life

This study is an artistic exploration of my personal history through the analysis of a choreographic study. The study expounded on how specific layers of my personality impact my daily movement. My research question was: As a dance/movement therapy (DMT) student, how does my body move through the world with the layers of a complex history? This question was investigated using arts-based research. The autoethnography consisted in the analysis of a choreographic piece and its process of creation. This also furthered the study of how my body moved with and took in the world around me. The specific layers of my personality that were illuminated by the research are a history of trauma and my journey with sexuality. As choreographic process, I utilized the practice of Authentic Movement while I analyzed my piece using the framework of Laban Movement Analysis. This study's findings support the idea that examining the self through movement and creativity could prove beneficial and meaningful. I was able to connect to my body and mind on physical and emotional levels, creating a positive and lasting impression. This

study's arts-based research method has the potential to encourage other dance/movement therapists to explore how their bodies move through the world, further cultivating the relationships with themselves and their clients.

**Chelsey L. Kimsey** has recently graduated from Lesley University. She is a LMHC and R-DMT candidate. Chelsey is looking forward to working with children and their families, the LGBTQ community, as well as the special needs population. Chelsey also teaches with Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre.

### **A Community that Dances Never Dies: An Ethnographic Study on People of the African Diaspora Within the African Dance and Drum Community in Chicago**

This ethnographic study explored the possible innate healing properties and therapeutic aspects of West African dance within a public community setting for people of the African diaspora, specifically the African dance and drum community of Chicago (ADDCC). The study was conducted to identify a possible means for preventative work, explore the unique mental health needs of African Americans and expand the understanding of dance/movement therapy (DMT) concepts outside of the clinical setting. The research questions that helped guide this study were: If any, what are the innate healing properties and therapeutic aspects of West African dance for people of the African diaspora, specifically within the African dance and drum community? Furthermore, if West African dance is determined to be therapeutic, then in a community setting, could it assist in accommodating the unique mental health needs of African Americans, be used as a preventative intervention, and contribute to the understanding of DMT concepts outside of the clinical setting? The study's population was comprised of African American participants from the ADDCC. Approximately 50 causal participants and ten formal participants were selected: two participants between 55-60 years old, two between 30-54 years old, two between 18-29 years old, two dance instructors and two drummers, whose ages varied. The study revealed the usefulness of West African dance as a means to connect African Americans to their heritage of physical, mental, and spiritual healing. A narrative analysis of informal interviews, in-depth interviews, and participant observations established seven major categories in which West African dance was influential. The categories were condensed into three unique healing and therapeutic properties: emotional regulation, maintaining presence, and addressing diaspora stress. The results suggest for the integration of West African dance, DMT, and preventative programming for African Americans, as well as implications for future studies.

**Ifetayo Kitwana** graduated from The Ohio State University with a B.A. in Psychology. While in Ohio 'Ife' worked as a dance instructor and a case manager, assisting homeless/displaced adults and youth with mental health issues. She combined her passion for dance and degree in psychology, into a M.A. in Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling from Columbia College Chicago. Ife's goal is the elevation of the black community using DMT as a major tool for healing.

## Evaluation of the Effects of DMT with Teenagers in Special Education in Quebec Following the Descriptive Phenomenological Research Method

Dance/movement therapy (DMT) in Quebec represents both a new profession and a new field of research. Consequently, the effects of this practice needs to be investigated in order to gain recognition within the actual Quebecer context where dance/movement therapy (DMT) is a less known and recognized therapy among the creative arts therapies. With the collaboration of the National Center for Dance Therapy of the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, an innovative project was developed with teenagers in special education in two public schools in the metropolitan region of Montreal. The project aimed to achieve following therapeutic goals: self-esteem, socialization, perseverance/academic motivation and school attendance. In other countries, DMT is recognized to be particularly beneficial for populations who struggle with communication and body image, which is the case in some specialized educational institutions (Chaiklin, 1975). Those difficulties are evident in this study's participants diagnosed with behavioral disorders, moderate intellectual disability, attention deficit disorder or multiple disabilities. This research aimed to describe the lived experience of the participants through the methodology of Descriptive Phenomenological Approach as developed by Giorgi (1997). The analysis of the 40 semi-structured interviews provided an overall picture of the effects of dance/movement therapy as perceived by the participants ( $n = 31$ ), their teachers ( $n = 8$ ) and the dance therapist ( $n = 1$ ). The preliminary results show three main themes: socialization, enjoyment and destigmatization, the last of which is a new avenue. While this study is still exploratory as it is the first study of its kind to be conducted in Quebec, it brings a debut of understanding of the possible effects of DMT in the area and different avenues for future research. This study was possible with the financial help of the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC).

**Annie L'Ecuyer**, is now doing her doctoral studies in psychology, after completing her collegiate studies in dance. At the same time, she is part of the first cohort of the ADTA's Alternate Route Program in Dance/Movement Therapy in Quebec. For five years now, she sits as the co-president on the board of a community organization offering art therapy to adults with mental disorders (Expression Lasalle).

### How are Dance/Movement Therapists Using Touch?

Dance/movement therapy (DMT) aims to work with the body and all of the experiences it holds, but the use of touch in the practice of DMT has been relatively underexplored. This qualitative study interviewed two experienced dance/movement therapists who work with individuals suffering from mental illness. With an average of 32.5 years of experience in the work, the interviewees spoke about their experience with and attitudes towards touch in the work. After interview transcriptions were analyzed, nine themes emerged: (1) touch is complicated; (2)

permission is needed; (3) the group as a whole; (4) significant moments; (5) peer contact; (6) handholding; (7) other ways; (8) touch and development; (9) touch and DMT. Overall, touch was discussed as a positive, supportive and necessary intervention within DMT. The research participants also felt that touch must be approached with caution and with consideration for the individual, but that it was at times irreplaceable from any other intervention. Implications from the current research suggest positive outcomes of using touch in DMT and the need for more studies related to the multi-layered topic.

**Sara McIntyre** graduated from Lesley University in Spring 2016. Her first year of school was spent on campus followed by two years on the West Coast, where she completed her thesis and final internship at Napa State Hospital. Sara's thesis, *How Are Dance/Movement Therapists Using Touch*, was provoked through site experiences where touch was a hot topic. She hopes to continue examining touch in DMT by inviting others to speak about their experiences.

### **The Adult Inpatient's Experience of Touch in Dance/Movement Therapy Groups**

This study sought to explore the phenomenon of touch as a therapeutic intervention, utilized within dance/movement therapy (DMT) groups on an adult psychiatric inpatient unit. Its aim was to answer the research question: how does the adult psychiatric inpatients experience the use of touch in DMT groups? The researcher used purposive sampling, to use discretion about whom to include in the study. Twelve participants were selected from a psychiatric inpatient unit at Maimonides Medical Center in New York. Of the 12 participants, seven were women and five were men. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 65, and had a mean age of 42. The participants also varied in ethnicities from Romanian, Bangladeshi, Cuban, Italian, Hispanic, African American, and Anglo ethnicities, and represented a range of psychiatric diagnoses including Schizoaffective Disorders, Schizophrenia, Bipolar I Disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorders, Anxiety Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder and Substance Abuse Disorders. Data collection utilized semi-structured interviews to gather information about participants' experiences, then transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Themes that emerged included: the initial reactions concerning touch within the group, building relationships through touch, special moments of touch in the group, touch memory, and the understanding of touch inside and outside of the hospital setting. This study contributes to DMT literature because it is the first to provide insight into the patient's experience of touch as an intervention in DMT groups. The documentation of patient experiences supports the previous reasoning for touch, which was theorized to enhance relationships, communicate emotions, and promote unity. These results provide dance/movement therapists with a potentially deeper understanding of patients' reactions to touch interventions that contribute to the potential to use touch with greater efficacy.

**Lauren Mickle** obtained her BFA in Dance from the University of North Texas in Denton and recently graduated with her MS in dance/movement therapy from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated with academic honors from both institutions. Currently, she is seeking employment as a dance/movement therapist and is credentialed with her R-DMT. Lauren looks forward to utilizing her passion for dance to provide clinical care in the mental health field.

### **You, Me, and We: An Artistic Inquiry Exploring Embodied Self-Awareness**

The purpose of this artistic inquiry was to engage in a creative, systematic, and intentional process of self-exploration while fostering embodied self-awareness. I aspired to answer the following research question: How will engaging in embodied self-awareness influence and inform the relationships I create with others and myself? Additionally, I have considered how my use of Laban's *effort time* influences my embodied self-awareness. As sole-researcher and participant, data were collected by self-reflecting on intuitively felt meaningful experiences between myself and another person(s). Movement narratives, embodied journal entries, photos evocative of my experiences, along with fluctuating my use of effort time served as data for intuitive analysis. The organic process of analyzing recurring themes and synthesizing information occurred in consultation with a dance/movement therapist and validated with a resonance panel. Preliminary findings revealed a relationship between authenticity and embodied self-awareness as well as an increase in sensitivity to body sensations. Secondly, fluctuating my use of effort time provided access to embodied self-awareness. Findings suggest that there is a triadic relationship between authenticity, embodied self-awareness, and interpersonal relationships, though the nature of the triadic relationship remains unclear. Practicing embodied self-awareness may prove useful for developing dance/movement therapists when creating and sustaining effective therapeutic relationships. Furthermore, the use of fluctuating effort time as an intervention may support clients in accessing their own embodied self-awareness.

**Peter Navarro** is a MA candidate at Columbia College Chicago. He received his BA in clinical psychology from Tufts University. Peter worked for seven years within the mental health field in Boston as a case manager, rehabilitation specialist, and assistant program coordinator for children/adolescents with trauma, autism, as well as homeless adults. Peter is an accomplished professional dancer and choreographer, and continually seeks to integrate his creative process in his work within dance/movement therapy.

## Personality Traits and Their Associated Movement Patterns as Depicted by Laban Motor Elements

One of the basic suppositions in dance/movement therapy is that a person's individual motor pattern expresses their unique personality. Yet, research supporting this notion is scarce. The current study investigated if Laban motor elements are associated with each of the Five Factor Model personality traits. Sixty participants (32 females, 28 males, average age 30.6 years old) completed the NEO-FFI questionnaire and were video-taped during five segments: two interviews (about a happy and a sad experience) and three sessions of free movement (expressing happiness, sadness and neutral emotion). Each video segment lasted about two minutes. Each 2-min video segment was subsequently coded for the amount of time each participant moved the Laban motor elements selected for the study. Selection of Laban motor elements was based on previous literature, knowledge of Laban Movement Analysis and our hypothesis of which Laban motor elements might be associated with each personality trait, leading to coding of overall 14 motor elements. Using Spearman correlations, we correlated the scores for each personality trait with the amount of the motor elements hypothesized to correlate with that trait (1) during the neutral movements; (2) during all movement segments. The correlations were adjusted for multiple comparisons using FDR correction. Results indicated that during the neutral movements *Neuroticism* was significantly correlated with moving the head down ( $p = 0.039$ ); *Openness to experience* was significantly correlated with Spreading ( $p = 0.001$ ) and Retreating ( $p = 0.022$ ); *Agreeableness* was significantly correlated with Rotation ( $p = 0.029$ ). Correlation of the motor behavior during all movement segments (i.e., the entire 10 min of video) showed that *Openness to experience* was significantly correlated with Rising ( $p = 0.011$ ) and Spreading ( $p = 0.001$ ), and had a tendency to significantly correlate with Rotation ( $p = 0.051$ ). No significant correlations were found between *Extraversion* and *Conscientiousness* and their hypothesized motor elements.

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**Tal Shafir**, PhD, R-DMT After teaching dance and working as a dance-movement therapist, Shafir earned her PhD in neurophysiology of motor control at University of Michigan. Following two postdoctoral fellowships in brain-behavior interactions and neuroscience of emotions, she developed her unique interdisciplinary research focused on movement-emotion interaction, its underlying brain mechanisms and clinical applications in mental and neurological disorders. Shafir is an assistant professor at The Graduate School for Creative Arts Therapies, University of Haifa.

## Breaking Free and Regaining Control: Resilience-Building through Dance/Movement Therapy for People Living with Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is a complex phenomenon, profoundly affecting the quality of life and the entire personhood of the afflicted individuals. Dance/movement therapy (DMT) is a potentially effective approach that can address the multidimensional impact of chronic pain; however, there is a lack of research and little is known about the mechanisms of DMT for chronic pain management. This study aimed to (a) examine the effect of DMT on pain and psychological outcomes - mood, stress, relaxation, body awareness, kinesiophobia, and resilience, and (b) develop a theoretical model that explains the mechanisms of DMT for resilience-building in people with chronic pain. A three-phase Mixed Methods Grounded Theory study was conducted, during which a preliminary model was generated based on two sets of data collection and analysis processes (i.e., meta-modeling and grounded theory), tested through a clinical experiment (i.e., a 10-week group DMT intervention), and then refined and integrated to construct a final composite model. A total of 35 people living with chronic pain ( $M = 54.1$ , Female = 89%) participated in the study. The results show that there were statistically significant improvements in resilience ( $p < .001$ ), kinesiophobia ( $p = .03$ ), body awareness ( $p = .02$ ), and pain intensity ( $p = .03$ ) over time. 68% of people felt moderately to a great deal better after the intervention. We also found significant within session changes for mood, stress, relaxation, and pain ( $p < .001$ ). Key mechanisms such as activating self-agency, connecting to self, connecting to others, enhancing emotional intelligence, and reframing, as well as intervening conditions and contextual conditions were identified. Based on these findings, a theoretical model explicating the mechanisms of DMT for resilience-building in people with chronic pain was constructed. DMT is a promising treatment that supports positive coping and adjustment in people living with chronic pain through activating unique mind and body pathways.

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**Minjung Shim, PhD, BC-DMT** has obtained her MA and PhD in Creative Arts Therapies from Drexel University, and is currently receiving postdoctoral training at the Mind–body Clinical Research Center of SUNY Stony Brook. She has worked with children and adults with various psychological and medical disorders. Her interest is to apply DMT as a part of an integrative healthcare framework for treating people with complex medical problems and identifying treatment mechanisms of DMT specified by theories.

## Body Memory in those who have Experienced Loss in Childhood and Adolescence: Implications for Dance/Movement Therapy

Continuing bonds with deceased persons is often discussed in grief literature, especially in children who are grieving the death of a parent or caregiver. The body is often described as important to the experience of grief, but few studies have

investigated the bodily experience of grief or continuing bonds in children, outside the context of pathology. The goal of this phenomenological research study was to describe the experience of body memory in those who lost a parent or caregiver in childhood or adolescence. With a sample of three participants, the author conducted individual interviews that consisted of a movement elicitation process and a verbal interview. Analysis of the verbal interviews revealed nine universal themes. Five of these themes: a sense of reliving the experience; body memory being foreign but familiar; the experience of age in body memory; embodying leads to understanding; and the immediacy and frequency of body memory, pertained to the nature of body memory. Two further themes: a sense of falling, and oscillation between opposing states, described specific body sensations. The remaining two themes: the emotional charge of body memory moves toward resilience; and the relationship between tension and emotion, connected the body to emotions. Discussion included the implications of these themes for future study and for the use of dance/movement therapy in grief counseling.

**Sara Anne Simpkins** graduated from Drexel University's Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling program in 2016. Sara received an award for Outstanding Overall Achievement while at Drexel. A lifelong dancer, Sara's background includes theater, yoga, choreography, and a B.A. in History from Goucher College. Sara currently lives and works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

## **The Integration of Complementary Modalities**

### **Dance/Movement Therapy and Music Therapy on an Inpatient Psychiatric Unit**

Dance/movement therapy as a developing field necessitates the development of new approaches, tools, and techniques to enhance patients' therapeutic experiences. The purpose of this thesis was to explore and describe the integration of complementary modalities, specifically music therapy and dance/movement therapy, with adult psychiatric inpatients. A multiple-case study was conducted over 13 co-facilitated sessions to examine the collaborative leadership roles, creative multimodal interventions and participant responses. Through participant observation, process notes, video recordings and post-session processing, a content analysis was completed and the noteworthy outcomes were delineated. Findings included live, empathically attuned music, novel music and movement structures, the use of vocal expression, verbal processing, multi-modal explorations of imagery, and the total integration of the modalities. The results of this investigation suggest positive implications for combining the two modalities. In the context of brief hospitalizations, it is important to offer patients an array of artistic modalities to most efficiently and effectively address their preferences and needs. This thesis proposes that the integration of the arts in treatment can potentially broaden and strengthen the therapeutic process, while collaboration between clinicians can simultaneously enrich treatment approaches and encourage professional growth. This research



contributed to the existing literature that supports the integration of creative arts therapies during treatment groups.

**Lucia Sirota**, MS, R-DMT, earned her MS in dance/movement therapy from Pratt Institute in 2015. She currently works in adult inpatient psychiatry at Bellevue Hospital Center in New York. Lucia is a dancer, cellist and pianist. Her experience in dance and music prompted an interest to explore multi-modal approaches for therapeutic treatment. Lucia's thesis research examined the integration of dance/movement therapy and music therapy in treatment groups for adult patients in a psychiatric setting.

### **Self-Care Practices for Dance/Movement Therapy Student Interns: A Multifaceted Toolbox**

The purpose of this project is to create tools for self-care practices that help second-year dance/movement therapy (DMT) students at Columbia College Chicago cope with hazards encountered within clinical practice. The importance of developing effective self-care habits for practitioners in therapeutic professions is emphasized in literature, and it is encouraged that it is developed during a student's graduate training experience. Literature in the areas of therapists' self-care practices, counselor development, burnout, compassion fatigue, counter transference, somatic counter transference, therapist distress, and vicarious traumatization are reviewed. The guiding questions for this project were: (a) what self-care activities are most effective for DMT student interns? (b) what would a multifaceted self-care tool look like for DMT student interns? (c) what body-based self-care activities are most effective for dance/movement therapy students? A product development methodology was used, the Eight Stage-Gate Process for New Product Development, which involved the collection of external input through a survey gathering quantitative and qualitative data about respondents' own self-care practices. A total of 125 surveys were distributed online with a 49% response rate. Input was analyzed using statistical analysis of quantitative input and summative content analysis of qualitative input. Preliminary conclusions indicated 98% of survey respondents experienced at least one hazard of being a therapist during their DMT internship experience, and 93% of survey respondents considered developing a self-care practice as a graduate student an important process. The survey provided insight into how different types of self-care were prioritized, and what types of self-care were difficult to include in individual self-care practices. From this input, a booklet and website were created and made available to future students enrolling in Columbia College Chicago's program.

**Stephanie Terrell** is a second-year dance/movement therapy student at Columbia College Chicago. She received her BA in dance from Texas Woman's University. She interned at Jesse Brown VA with veterans and adult day program House of Welcome with older adults with memory loss. Currently in Chicago, Stephanie is employed at House of Welcome as a part-time dance/movement therapist.

## Comparing Group Processes Between an Intensive Verbal Personal Development

### Group and an Intensive Dance Movement Personal Development Group

This study aimed to identify and compare group processes between a Dance Movement (DM) intensive Personal Development (PD) group with an intensive verbal PD group through movement expressions as well as through verbalization. The comparison between the groups was based on participants' perceptions of their group experience and movement observation of the group's processes. These processes have been explored before through group psychotherapy but not yet in the creative arts in a comparative way using movement observation. A DM PD group is based on dance/movement psychotherapy (DMP) interventions and techniques and was led by a dance/movement therapist.\* The study's question, "how do group processes vary when expressed non-verbally through body-movement or verbally when comparing a mainly non-verbal DM intensive personal development group with a mainly verbal personal development group?" led to the exploration of differences and similarities between groups. The study incorporated two theoretical frameworks; DMP and group psychotherapy. The study was conducted in Israel with participants who were students and professionals of creative art therapies and group facilitation training background. Group processes were identified in accord with a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology methodology through two methods of collection and analysis; movement observation using Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. Findings indicated similar themes between the groups such as aggression, cohesion, intimacy, self-awareness and different themes such as jealousy, anxiety, use of touch, among others. This comparison study through the lenses of movement and words contributes to the understanding and value of group processes in group therapy. It highlights the significance of PD groups to training and continued practice for healthcare professionals specifically in DMP.

\*PD is not considered a therapy group although has therapeutic elements and as such cannot be called a DMP group not to confuse it with a psychotherapy group.

**Anat Eshet Vago** is a candidate in the Doctorate Program of the School of Education, University of Hertfordshire. She has been a dance/movement therapist for over 25 years and is qualified in Organizational and Occupational Psychology and as a group facilitator. She has extensive experience in special education, psychiatric hospitals, teaching DMP in Israel and the UK, supervising students and running workshops in DMP and group work.